

performance over the Repolle et al. assembly. Thus, Repolle et al. does not anticipate the claimed invention.

II. The Claims Are Neither Disclosed Nor Suggested by the Cited

References

Claims 5, 8, 10, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Repolle et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,828,012). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As stated above, the claimed invention possesses unique features which are not disclosed or suggested by the teachings of Repolle et al. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Repolle et al. that the support layer is not contiguous with the entire surface of the protective membrane in both the bonded and unbonded regions. Thus, Repolle et al. does not render obvious applicants' claimed invention.

II. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the present invention as defined by claims 1-12 and 24-27 is neither taught nor suggested by the reference of record. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that these claims are now in form for allowance. If further questions remain, applicants requests that the Examiner telephone applicants' undersigned representative before issuing a further Office Action.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Lewis White

Carol A. Lewis White, 33,306
W. L. Gore & Associates, Inc.
551 Paper Mill Road
P.O. Box 9206
Newark, DE 19714-9206
(302) 738-4880

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Enclosure: Clean Version of Amended Claims